



*PAUSE FOR MEDITATION - The Rev. Dr. David Zwifka reads a passage from the Bible in his Harrisburg office at Neighborhood Dispute Settlement. The newly minted Priest-in-Charge of St. Michael's and All Angels Episcopal Church is a part-time pastor. He joined the parish community in June 2008. Press/Journal Photo-Ashley Carelock*

## **Priest-in-charge**

### **Episcopal clergyman serves small congregation with dedication**

by Ashley Carelock, Press And Journal Staff : 12/3/2008

It wasn't his original calling, but for Rev. Dr. David A. Zwifka, there's no better job than spreading the good news through preaching.

Zwifka recently joined the parish community of St. Michael's and All Angels (SMAA) Episcopal Church in Middletown as a part-time Priest-in-Charge. The Western New York native has been with the parish since last summer, when he came to provide pastoral services.

Zwifka said, "SMAA is a tiny congregation, with a strong message and ministry. They are very much a part of the Episcopalian tradition."

That tradition, according to Zwifka, includes an enriching prayer life, music as a central point of worship, and Communion every Sunday. As a leader in the church community, he hopes to help the parish to find new ways to spread that tradition and grow the congregation.

As a part-time pastor, Zwifka knows it can be a challenge, especially as he maintains a full-time job. He also serves as executive director of Neighborhood Dispute Settlement, a community based conflict resolution center in Harrisburg.

Part-time pastors have become a trend in the church community, as

resources hinder small congregations from hiring full-time help. According to Zwifka, it's a long honored tradition, as "even St. Paul supported his ministry by his work as a tent maker."

"This arrangement allows St. Michael's to maintain its identity as a small, intimate Christian community," Zwifka said. "It is able to focus its resources on its mission, rather than simply sustaining an overwhelming operating budget."

Located on the corner of Ann and Grants streets, St. Michael's and All Angels was founded in 1869. The small congregation went without a pastor for over a year, after Rev. Canon Kate Harrigan left to fill a position with the Episcopal Diocese of Central Pennsylvania. In June, Zwifka joined the church to offer services.

A newcomer to the area, Zwifka moved to Harrisburg in 2003. He is a graduate of **Houghton College**, Christ the King Seminary and The Catholic University of America, where he completed his doctoral studies. A former priest in the Catholic Church, Zwifka made the decision to join the Episcopalian Church in 2000.

"I went through a rather lengthy process of training and discernment," said Zwifka.

In 2006, he was accepted as an Episcopalian priest and offered assistance to any parish communities in need of help. St. Michael's and All Angels is Zwifka's first pastoral church. As a Priest-in-Charge, he will be a partner with the Vestry of the parish to manage the administration of the church. He is also responsible for supervising worship and education.

Senior warden Hank Morrow said, "Now that Father David is among us, we hope to turn a corner and begin to build on what we have accomplished. We hope that his ministry will help us move to a new place in our community and are happy he is with us."